

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim1 (canceled)

Claims 2 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element position between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed; and

wherein said biasing element has a resilient restoration force that is greater than a combined weight of said sleeve and a golf club.

Claims 3 – 4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element position between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed;

wherein said sleeve comprises an inner tube and a gripper connected to said inner tube; and

wherein said inner tube does not extend beyond the top end of said elongated tube when said biasing element is in an expanded position.

Claims 6 – 7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (canceled)

Claim 9 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element positioned between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed; and

a gripper connected to a top portion of said elongated tube.

Claim 10 (original): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 9 wherein said gripper element is interconnected to said sleeve such that when said sleeve is pushed downward into said elongated tube, said gripper element will move inward toward a central axis of said elongated tube.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element position between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed; and

wherein said latch is a push-and-engage latch, and said latch is adapted such that when said sleeve is pushed downward into to said elongated tube said latch engages and secures said sleeve, and when said sleeve is subsequently push downward said latch disengages and releases said sleeve.

Claim 12 – 14 (canceled)

Claim 15 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element position between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed;

wherein said sleeve comprises an inner tube and a gripper connected to said inner tube; and

a padding attached to said gripper.

Claim 16 (original): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 15 wherein said padding comprises a polymeric material.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element position between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed;

wherein said sleeve comprises an inner tube and a gripper connected to said inner tube; and

a polymeric structure adapted to capture a club head of said golf club, wherein said polymeric structure is attached to a distal end of said gripper.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A golf club storage apparatus comprising:

an elongated tube having a top end and a bottom end;

a sleeve adapted for holding a golf club, wherein said sleeve is slidably positioned within said elongated tube;

a biasing element positioned between said elongated tube and said sleeve wherein said biasing element is adapted to bias the position of said sleeve relative to said elongated tube;

a latch adapted to secure said sleeve inside said elongated tube when said biasing element is compressed; and

a gripper attached to said elongated tube, wherein said gripper is configured such that when said biasing element is compressed, the gripper element moves toward said golf club, and when said biasing element is expanded the gripper element moves away from said golf club.

Claim 19 (original): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 18 further comprising:

a padding attached to said gripper.

Claim 20 (original): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:

a polymeric structure adapted to capture a club head of said golf club, wherein said polymeric structure is attached to a distal end of said gripper.

Claims 21 – 22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (previously presented): A protective device for storing a golf club comprising:

a first elongated tube adapted for storing a golf club;

a second elongated tube having an inner diameter greater than the outer diameter of said first tube, wherein said first elongated tube is slidably positioned within said second elongated tube;

a gripper adapted to hold said golf club, wherein said gripper is connected to said first elongated tube;

a spring positioned between said first and second tube, where in said spring is adapted to bias the position of said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube;

a locking mechanism adapted to secure said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube when said spring is compressed; and

wherein said spring having a reactive spring force greater than a combined weight of said first elongated tube and an average golf club.

Claims 24 – 25 (canceled)

Claim 26 (original): A protective device for storing a golf club comprising:

a first elongated tube adapted for storing a golf club;

a second elongated tube having an inner diameter greater than the outer diameter of said first elongated tube, wherein said first elongated tube is slidably positioned within said second elongated tube;

a gripper adapted to hold said golf club, wherein said gripper is connected to said second elongated tube; and

a spring positioned between said first and second tube, where in said spring is adapted to bias the position of said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube.

Claim 27 (original): The protective device of claim 26 wherein said spring is positioned between an outer bottom surface of said first elongated tube and an inner bottom surface of said second elongated tube.

Claim 28 (original): The protective device of claim 26 further comprising:

a locking mechanism for securing said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube when said resilient spring is compressed.

Claim 29 (original): The protective device of claim 28 wherein said resilient spring having a reactive spring force greater than a combined weight of said first elongated and an average golf club.

Claim 30 (original): The protective device of claim 26 wherein said resilient spring having a reactive spring force greater than a weight of said first elongated tube and less than a combined weight of an average golf club and said first elongated tube.

Claim 31 (original): The protective device of claim 26 further comprising:

an interlocking mechanism adapted to connect said first elongated tube to said gripper.

Claim 32 (canceled)

Claim 33 (previously presented): A protective device for storing a golf club comprising:

a first elongated tube adapted for storing a golf club;

a second elongated tube having an inner diameter greater than the outer diameter of said first tube, wherein said first elongated tube is slidably positioned within said second elongated tube;

a spring positioned between said first and second tube, where in said spring is adapted to bias the position of said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube;

a gripper adapted to hold said golf club when said spring is compressed, wherein said gripper is integrated within a midsection of said first elongated tube; and

wherein said gripper is a clamp.

Claim 34 (previously presented): A protective device for storing a golf club comprising:

a first elongated tube adapted for storing a golf club;

a second elongated tube having an inner diameter greater than the outer diameter of said first tube, wherein said first elongated tube is slidably positioned within said second elongated tube;

a spring positioned between said first and second tube, where in said spring is adapted to bias the position of said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube;

a gripper adapted to hold said golf club when said spring is compressed, wherein said gripper is integrated within a midsection of said first elongated tube; and

a locking mechanism adapted to secure said first elongated tube within said second elongated tube when said resilient spring is compressed.

Claim 35 (original): The protective device of claim 34 wherein said spring having a reactive spring force greater than a combined weight of said first elongated tube and an average golf club.

Claim 36 – 38 (canceled)

Claim 39 (previously presented): A golf club storage system comprising:

a golf bag;

a plurality of elongated tubes positioned within said golf bag, wherein each of said plurality of elongated tubes further comprising (a) an inner tube slidably positioned within each of said elongated tube, (b) a gripper connected to each of said inner tube, and (c) a spring positioned between each of said elongated tubes and its corresponding inner tube; and

wherein each of said plurality of springs having a reactive spring force greater than a combined weight of said inner tube and a golf club.

Claim 40 (canceled)

Claim 41 (previously presented): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 2 further comprising:

an indicia located on the sleeve.

Claim 42 – 43 (canceled)

Claim 44 (previously presented): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 9 further comprising:

an indicia located on the sleeve.

Claim 45 (previously presented): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 9 further comprising:

an indicia located on the gripper.

Claim 46 (previously presented): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 39 further comprising:

an indicia located on at least one of the inner tubes.

Claim 47 (previously presented): The golf club storage apparatus of claim 39 further comprising:

an indicia located on at least one of the grippers.